

A close-up photograph of a mosquito is the background for the top section of the page. The mosquito is shown in profile, facing left, with its long legs and wings clearly visible. The background is a blurred, light brown surface.

# Mosquitoes

## INFORMATION & RESOURCES ON HOW TO AVOID VIRUSES FROM MOSQUITO BITES

Mosquitoes are considered to be one of the deadliest creatures on earth-about 725,000 people are killed every year by mosquito-borne diseases<sup>3</sup>. Malaria alone affects 200 million, of which an estimated 600,000 die. Mosquitoes also carry Dengue Fever, Yellow Fever, Encephalitis, West Nile Virus and the Zika Virus. There are over 50 varieties of mosquitoes in New York.<sup>1</sup> Not all carry viruses and not all mosquito-related viruses are present in New York. The two that are most prevalent are West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

### WHAT ATTRACTS MOSQUITOES?

Mosquitoes breed near and lay eggs in standing or stagnant water and are most active at dawn or dusk. They are attracted to octenol, a chemical released in sweat, as well as cholesterol, folic acid, certain bacteria, skin lotions, perfumes and heat.<sup>1</sup>

#### WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV)

Mosquitoes become infected with the virus when they feed on birds that have WNV. Humans can be infected when bitten by an infected mosquito. The virus can also be spread from a mother during pregnancy, delivery or by breast-feeding. WNV is typically not a fatal or lasting virus, however in some cases it can progress into encephalitis or meningitis. The onset period is 3-14 days and there is no treatment. Symptoms may include fever, headache and body aches, nausea, skin rash and swollen lymph glands. These symptoms typically last a few days - but may last several weeks. Seek immediate medical attention if symptoms get more severe.<sup>1</sup>

#### EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS (EEE)

Eastern Equine Encephalitis is a rare, but serious and often fatal infection that causes inflammation of the brain. It is spread by the bite of a mosquito infected with EEE virus. Animals can also be infected by bites, however people and animals cannot transmit the virus to each other. Symptoms include headache, high fever, chills, and vomiting that may progress into disorientation, seizures, inflammation of the brain, and coma. Approximately a third of patients who develop EEE die, and many of those who survive have mild to severe brain damage. There is no vaccine and treatment includes hospitalization, respiratory support, intravenous fluids, and prevention of other infections.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE ZIKA VIRUS

Though the mosquitoes that carry the Zika virus have not yet migrated or been able to live in our environment in the Northern United States, New Yorkers are still at risk of getting the virus from contact with blood or bodily fluids from those that have traveled to infected areas and been bitten. The virus can be sexually transmitted and can cause birth defects. Symptoms include fever, rash, headache, joint pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes), and muscle pain. Symptoms are mild and last for about a week. Zika can be tested through blood or urine samples.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NYS Department of Health; <sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Control; <sup>3</sup> World Health Organization

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Ensure that windows have screens and repair any holes.
- If sleeping outdoors or with windows open, use a mosquito net.
- Eliminate breeding grounds. Once a week clean and inspect areas that hold stagnate or standing water such as tires, bird baths, toys and trash containers.
- Use protective measures around dead birds and animals.
- Avoid perfumes and colognes when outdoors.
- Cover as much skin as possible.
- Use EPA registered repellent appropriate for time outside.
- Always follow instructions and do not spray in an enclosed area.
- Spray on outside of clothing and exposed skin only. Never spray on wounds, the face or on skin covered by clothing.
- Wash off after coming indoors.

### SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR AVOIDING THE ZIKA VIRUS

- Before traveling, check to see if the area you are visiting has had reported cases of Zika.
- Avoid travel to infected areas if you are pregnant. The virus can be carried from mother to fetus and cause birth defects.
- If you have traveled to a Zika infected area, use protection (condoms) for 3 weeks if you are planning to be sexually active as Zika can be transmitted sexually.
- Use general mosquito bite prevention.

### IF YOU HAVE THE ZIKA VIRUS

- Do not let others come in contact with your blood or bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain. Avoid aspirin and other (NSAIDS) until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding.
- Get plenty of rest and stay hydrated.

For more information and resources visit:

[www.cseany.org/safety](http://www.cseany.org/safety)



Subscribe to our newsletter:

**THE SAFETY NET**  
CSEA

**CSEA**  
Local 1000 AFSCME, AFL-CIO

CSEA has been winning the fight for safe and healthy working conditions for over 100 years, yet there is more to be done. Hazards old and new- from Asbestos to Zika- remain a threat to workers every day. CSEA will not back down from the fight and nothing is more important than saving lives and keeping workers free from injury. Your help is needed now more than ever.

*The life you save could be YOUR OWN.*